30

An exhortation to his Dearely beloued Countrimen, all the Natiues of the Countie of *Lancaster*, inhabiting in and about the Citie of *London*; tending to perswade and stirre them vp to a yearely contribution, for the erecting of Lectures, and maintaining of some godly and painfull preachers in such places of that Country as haue most neede, by reason of ignorance and superstition there abounding:

composed by *George Walker* Pastor of St. *Iohn* the *Euangelists* in *Watlingstreet* in *LONDON*.

MY deare and louing Countrimen, whom God by his gracious prouidence hath together with my selfe, transplanted out of our natiue Country the Countie of *Lancaster*, (which, as it is at this day, so hath much more in the dayes of our youth and within our memorie, beene as a rough, vntilled barren desert, ouer-runne with ignorance, superstition and poperie) and hath planted vs by the waters of comfort in a wealthy and fruitfull place, where all blessings needfull for soule and body are extended vnto vs as a flowing streame: you are not ignorant of that saying of our Sauiour, That *to whom much is giuen, of them much shall be required*: yea I doubt not but ye haue all learned this lesson; that as God after great deliuerance from great euills, dangers and miseries requires much thankfulnesse to himselfe at the hands of the deliuered: so also much compassion towards their brethren, who still remaine in the same miseries and dangers, and a readinesse to helpe and succour them vpon euery occasion and opportunity which shall bee offered. This our Sauiour teacheth vs by his example and continuall practise, in that he is *touched with our infirmities, and by the things which hee suffered being tempted, is become a mercifull high Preist able and readie to succour them that are tempted*: And this hee enjoynes vs all to put in practise, in that charge which he gaue to his Apostle? *when thou art*

Isai 66 12. Luke 12.48.

Heb.4.15. and 2.18.

59 - 14, 15

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY CAMBRIDGE

Luke. 22. 32. *conuerted strengthen thy brethren.* Now my brethren *if ye know*
Iohn 13. 17. *these things, happy* and blessed shall you be *if ye* also *doe them*, as our Sauiour affirmeth in the Gospell. And that you may by so doing obteine more easily this happinesse and blessednesse: lo here I will shew you a short cut and a ready way, euen one only worke of piety and charity which I will commend vnto you, in which worke alone (if you shall wisely and conscionably begin it, and therein carefully, cheerfully and constantly proceed and continue to the end according to that ability which God hath giuen to you) ye shall at once performe all these workes and duties of Christianitie; that is, you shall render and returne vnto God increase and fruit according to the talents which he hath committed to your trust, and the seed and cost of planting and tilling which he hath on you bestowed; you shall offer vp to his majestie a most acceptable sacrifice of thankfulnesse for his deliuerance of your soules from dangers of ignorance, superstition and prophanesse which ouer-spread the place of your natiuitie, and withall you shall shew all Christian compassion, and exercise brotherly charity and commiseration towards your brethren and Country, and by Gods grace and blessing on your indeauours, become powerfull instruments and effectuall meanes of sauing many soules; by turning them from
Acts 28. 18. darknesse to light, and from the power of Satan vnto God:
Colloss. 1. 12. that they may become fellow Saints with your selues, and coheires and partakers of the inheritance of glory in light.

This worke (to describe and set it forth plainely in that nature as it is here commended to you) is no more but a free, voluntary, cheerfull and charitable contribution of such yearly summes of money, as euery one of you, by means of that wealth and ability which God hath bestowed vpon him, may very well without impouerishing, pinching, or any way ouercharging of himselfe, or impairing of his estate, bestow for the maintaining of godly, painefull and profitable preachers of Gods word in those parts and parishes of our natiue Country of *Lancashire*, in which there is found to be greatest need, and most grieuous want & scarsity of preaching,

ing, and maintenance for preachers; that by their continuall labors, zealous preaching and conscionable paines, ignorance and superstition may be rooted out, true religion planted, Gods true worship set vp and established, and that by the conuerting of many soules, and instructing and confirming the weake, Gods true Church may there increase and flourish, and so that Country which is now in many places like a barren wildernesse, may become a fruitfull garden and pleasant vineyard of the Lord of hosts, well watered with plentifull showers of Gods heauenly and spirituall graces distilling from heauen, and with fountaines, springs and flowing streames of earthly and temporall blessings, which follow and accompanie the publike enterteinment of the Gospell, and the aduancement of Christs true Church in euery land.

This worke (if wee should seeke no further but looke vpon it, and take a view of it in it selfe, as it is here in plaine words propounded to vs) hath in it motiues sufficient of all sorts to draw vs, and moue vs to put it in present practise.

First, whereas in many other workes of bountie and liberalitie, grace and nature are found contrary, and while the one perswades vs to doe them, the other disswades vs from them; as for example, in the purchasing of great houses, lands and reuenues for our children, while naturall affection doth incite vs to disburse great summes, and to imploy all our wealth and estate; Grace on the contrary forbids vs to spend all on our children and fleshly kinred, which perhaps may proue wicked prodigalls, and abuse our riches to sinne and mischiefe, and tells vs that we ought rather to honour God with our wealth, by spending a great part thereof in workes of piety and charity vpon the poore members of Christ: And while Grace drawes vs to this, naturall affection doth draw and pull vs from it, vnto the other. Now in this worke here commended to you there is no such opposition betweene grace and nature, nor any such cause of distraction, but both together doe draw, pull and allure vs with ioynt forces: Grace tells vs that this being a worke of

pitty tending to Gods glory by the ſauing of many ſoules; the increaſe of his Church, and aduancement of true religion and his holy worſhippe, no good Chriſtian can refuſe to put his hand vnto it; but euery one ought to be, and will be forward in it. And becauſe this worke is alſo a worke of charitie not towards ſtrangers; but towards our Countrimen and kinred according to the fleſh, euen towards our ewne bretharen, and tends to this as one maine end to make our natiue Country bleſſed with all bleſſings heauenly and earthly; therefore naturall affection doth ſtrongly and vehemently pull vs and perſwade vs vnto it, and as we all naturally loue our Country and kinred; ſo we cannot but by the inſtinct of nature be forward in this worke.

Secondly, this contribution is not like thoſe antique taxes, which heathen Emperours, tyrants rather, vſed by their conſtraining commandements, and with ſtrong hand to wreſt from their ouer-awed & impotent vaſſals; nor like the rigid pennance and grieuous penalties, which Popiſh Prieſts and confeſſors doe often times inflict on their penitents as a ſatisfaction for their ſinnes; which either are aboue the ſtrength of their bodies, and tend to the endangering of their health and life, or ſurpaſſe their abilities and eſtates, and doe farre ouer-charge and much impouerish them; but this is onely of ſo much as the ſpirit of God ſhall inwardly moue and perſwade euery man to giue freely and cheerfully with all alacritie, and which God hath inabled him to giue without impouerishing of himſelfe, or weakening and impairing of his eſtate, and which may well be ſpared from other vaine expenſes and needleſſe ſuperfluities: ſo that here is no coulour of exception againſt this contribution, no leaſt cauſe for any to complaine, grudge or murmure againſt it, or to count it a burden: here is nothing required of any but what he is able and willing to doe, and that without any wrong, loſſe or damage to himſelfe at all.

Thirdly, this worke is not one of thoſe almes-deeds and workes of charity which are done in ſecret, which few ſee

but

but God; this is a publike worke like a candle vpon a candlesticke which giues light to all the house, besides the profit and comfort which it may bring to many and seuerall particular soules, and the gracious acceptation and bountifull reward which it may find with God; it shall vndoubtedly also bring great glory to Gods name, and be a meanes of many thankes giuen by many vnto God in his publicke Church and congregation. And as the multitude of them who receiue the benefit of this contribution, shall haue iust cause to laud and praise God continually: so many others, euen all they who see it a farre of and heare the fame and report of it, shall be prouoked and stirred vp by your example; and hereby you shall cause your lights to shine before men, *that they seeing your good workes, may glorifie your father which is in heauen*, as our Sauiour in the Gospell exhorteth. And whereas in other cases a worke of piety tending to the publike good cannot be done without great cost and charge, and requires a great summe: herein this contribution euery particular man may for a small oblation offered vp with a free heart obtaine the honour, and gaine the glory of a publicke worke, and become an example and patterne of piety to many others, and so bring great glory to God, and much benefit to the Church of Christ, with small charge to himselfe by reason of many hearts and hands conspiring together in this one worke.

Fourthly, in many other workes of piety and charitie, there are many doubts and discouragements often times; as for example, when a man must lay out a great summe, either vpon a great hazard and aduenture, being vncertaine whether it shall take good effect, and yeeld any fruit at all to himselfe or those to whom he doth intend it; as we see in many hospitalls and Colleges much subject to abuse; the cost bestowed vpon which is like *bread cast vpon the waters*, onely in hope of *finding it after many dayes* as wise *Salomon* speakes, *Eccles.* 11.1. Or when much is giuen away by men at their death in their last will to pious vses, of which they themselues being dead, can reape no benefit at all from the

prayers of the poore who enjoy it, as blind Papists would perswade the world; nor any comfort from the sight of the good fruit which it yeelds to posterity. But here in this contribution there is no such cause of doubting, nor any such scruple to dishearten any man: here is no great summe to bee aduentured or put forth vpon vncertainties; but a small yearly beneuolence to be paid quarterly, & continued so long only as it shall manifestly appear, to be well imployed to good purpose & for present profit, which payment also euery man shall haue in his power for his owne part to cease breake off and discontinue, if he doth see no manifest benefit thence presently arising according to his desire; but if it doth take good effect, it shall much aduance Gods glory before men, bring comfort, light and sauing health to many soules, and procure to the contributors many hearty prayers of their Country-men, who shall by this meanes be conuerted and comforted; which prayers vndoubtedly God will heare and accept, and at their request turne many blessings into their bosomes here in this life, where onely the prayers and thanksgiuing of Gods people, haue power to helpe and profit those for whom they are made and offered vp in the name and mediation of Christ.

Fifthly, whosoeuer hath a desire to put forth his talent of worldly wealth whatsoeuer it is more or lesse to the best aduantage, and so to imploy it that it may bring in double and trible gaine, surely he cannot finde a better way then this pious worke which is here commended vnto you. For the first and immediate end of this contribution is the setting vp and maintaining of godly, painfull and profitable preachers of Gods word in those parts of our native Country, where the word of God is most rare and precious, and there is greatest neede and scarsitie of preaching. Wee doe not meane to feede idle droanes, who will labour but little, and looke for large allowance; nor such as will labour and take paines but to small profit, for want of the art of prophecying, and method of profitable preaching; nor men of scandalous and vngodly life, who will doe more hurt by

their

their example, then good by their doctrine: But godly, painefull and profitable preachers, who will preach and teach, and labour out of conscience to God, with an hungring and thirsting desire, not to get wealth and maintenance, but to saue many soules, and to increase the Church of Christ, who also for a small stipend will take much pains, and will teach as well by good example, as by doctrine. Now where such preachers are set vp and maintained, there will follow plentifull preaching and hearing of the word of God, the word heard will beget faith, and bring many to beleeue in God and in Christ; faith will bring forth the the true worship of God, and holy inuocation or calling vpon his name; and true, deuout and faithfull calling vpon the name of the Lord, is the sure way to saluation, as may easily be gathered from the words of the holy Apostle, *Rom.* 10.13,14,15. But especially when such preachers are sent into barren places, and among a people ouer-runne with ignorance, superstition and profanesse for want of instruction, as in our natiue Country; they doe more preuaile with their godly labours, and bring more plentifull fruit, and increase to Gods Church in one yeare, and work more strang effects by turning many soules from darknesse to light, from profanesse to piety, from ignorance and superstition, to the sauing knowledge and true worship of God, and from the slauery and power of Satan, vnto the glorious liberty of Gods children, as experience in some parts of our Country hath of late proued; then many others as worthy and well qualified as they, or they themselues are able to doe in these parts where the light of the Gospell hath shined from the dayes of our fore-fathers. For as it is with vntilled ground, ouer-growne with briers, weeds and thornes; the first yeares plowing, sowing and manuring of it, doth worke a greater and more visible change from barrennesse to fruitfulnesse, then all plowing and manuring can doe in ground well tilled before, because that onely continueth and increaseth the old, doth not beget new fruitfulnesse: it is with a people when the word is sent first among them

them; If it doth preuaile with them at all, and if they doe not vtterly reject, but chearfully receiue it, they are more visibly changed from prophanesse and superstition, to piety and profession of true religion in the first yeare, then in a long time and many yeares after; so that both the preachers which labor among them, and the godly contributors who set them vp and maintaine them, may behold with joy and gladnesse of heart aboundance of present fruit and increase arising from small cost and labour, which is a strong motiue and encouragement to all Christians thus to imploy their talents which God hath committed to them, and to shew and exercise their charity and piety in this kind. To all these spirituall motiues and incouragements arising from spirituall increase, profit and benefit, we may adde the multitude and aboundance of temporall blessings and benefits which the Gospell brings with it to the Country and people, among whom it is generally and with publike consent receiued and imbraced; For experience hath taught the world in all ages, that as the heate and light of the Sunne accompanied with watering showers of raine and dew, doe make the earth fruitfull in corne, wine, oyle, and all other fruites which are required either for the profit and benefit, or for the pleasure and delight of man: So the light of the Gospell working the heate of true zeale in the hearts of a people, and drawing from them the teares of true repentance, and causing many such showers of heauenly moysture to distill from their eyes; neuer hath failed, but in all ages hath brought all store euen of earthly blessings with it, and made Gods Saints and people honourable, renowned, and of high esteeme, for their worldly greatnesse, wealth and prosperity in the eyes of the heathen nations among whom they haue liued. This was that which made religious and vpright *Noah* not onely the heire of the righteousnesse which is by faith, but also brought temporall deliuerance, and bodily safety to him and his family, in the vniuersall deluge and destruction of the old world, and made him and his sonnes the repairers of mankind, and the buil-

ders

builders of the new world which followed, as the Apostle hath obserued *Heb.* 11.7. This made *Melchisedek* the Priest & sacrificer of the high God, to liue and reigne a King of peace in all plenty and prosperity in the midst of the wicked *Canaanites*, while all the bordering Kings and neighbors were ouer-runne with the calamities of warre, and oppressed with the heauy yoke and bondage vnder *Chedarlaomer*, and other forraigne tyrants as we may reade *Gen.* 14. This made *Abraham*, the father of the faithfull, and *Isaac* his son the heire of promise, so to prosper and flourish in all prosperity, wealth and riches, that the heathen nations among whom they sojourned as strangers, did esteeme and stile them Princes of God; and potent Kings sought vnto them to enter into a league and oath of amity with them, as appears *Gen.* 13.2,6.& 21.22.&23 6.& 26.28. This made *Iacob* who fled ouer *Iordan* to his vncle *Laban* with a staffe in his hand, so to grow, increase and prosper, that he returned with oxen, asses, flocks, man-seruants and women-seruants, wiues and children, which made vp two troupes or bands as he himselfe confesseth to the glory of God that gaue them: *Gen.* 32.5.10. This made *Ioseph* to prosper euen in all worldly affaires, and all things whereunto he put his hand, *Gen.* 39.2.3.23. This brought all blessings of victory ouer enemies abroad, and of peace and plenty at home, with all honour, fame and renowne, to *Dauid*, *Hezechiah*, *Iosiah* and other religious Kings of *Israell* and *Iudah*; who receiued and beleeued the word of God, & obeyed it with all their hearts. And that large promise which God made to *Ioshua* the first Iudge and ruler ouer *Israell* after *Moses*, viz. that if he would religiously obey his word and law, not turning from it to the right hand or the left; he should certainly prosper whithersoeuer he did go; & in all things haue good successe: *Iosh.* 1.7,8 that same he actually performed, verified and made good not onely to him, and to all the people of *Israell* in his dayes: but also to all the godly and religious Iudges which succeeded him, and to the whole nation of the children of *Israell* vnder their gouernment, as appeares *Iudg.* 2. 18. And least a-

ny should thinke that these examples recorded in Scripture were extraordinary and miraculous; we haue also experience of the like in all ages, and euen in this age, and in this land wherein we liue. For notwithstanding all the Popes curses and thunder-bolts, and all the open assaults which he hath made, and the secret conspiracy which he hath put in practise against this land, incensing and stirring vp all his instruments of violence and cruelty against it, yet both in the dayes of King *Edward* and of Queene *Elizabeth* of blessed memorie, who reformed religion, and maintained the true preaching of the Gospell by publike authority; this Land and Church hath prospered and flourished, and in all worldly peace, plenty and prosperity excelled all other nations and Churches of the world. So that we may all vpon good experience with one mouth confesse, that true religion and the holy Gospell of Christ, which we haue receiued and lodged in this land vnder the reigne of our later Kings haue proued most profitable guests vnto vs; they haue ouer and aboue the aboundance of heauenly knowledge, and sauing graces which belong to eternall saluation, out of their more then Kingly bounty royally paid vs with all safety, security, peace, prosperity and plenty of all worldly blessings: yea we haue plaine promises and testimonies in the sacred Scriptures, that thus it shall be to all people of all nations, who receiue and embrace the Gospell in syncerity and truth, and professe true religion without hypocrisie. Our Sauiour in the Gospell promiseth, that if any *seeke first the kingdome of God and the righteousnesse thereof, they shall haue all other worldly blessings, (which the Gentiles so carefully seeke) ouer and aboue added vnto them*: *Matth.6.* 33. And in another place hee promiseth to such as renounce and forsake the things of this world for his sake and for loue to the Gospell, that they shall *receiue (besides life euerlasting in the world to come) an hundredfold more* euen of these earthly blessings here in this life: *Mark* 10.30. To which purpose we haue a most cleare testimonie of the holy Apostle Saint *Paul* 1 *Tim.*4.8. where he saith, that *godlinesse is profitable vnto all things hauing pro-*

mise

miſe of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.
Vpon theſe ſure and infallible grounds both of holy Scripture and common experience, I dare be bold to aſſure you (my deare Countri-men) that if you heartily and vnfeinedly deſire to ſee your natiue Country and kindred flouriſh in all worldly wealth and earthly proſperitie, you cannot for the obteining of your deſire in all the world find a more ready way, then this worke of piety which I here commend vnto you, which as it tends firſt to plant the Goſpell and true religion, ſo it will draw on all other bleſſings by meanes of them.

Beſides theſe motiues which ariſe from the conſideration of the worke it ſelfe, our natiue Countrie alſo, and the nature and diſpoſition of the people for whoſe vſe and benefit this worke is intended, doe moreouer afford and offer vnto vs many ſtrong incouragements. For wee are not to deale with a ſtubborne, bruitiſh ill natured people like the wild Iriſh, who naturally abhorre all ciuility, and are ſo deuoted to their owne old faſhions, that things which in themſelues are moſt reaſonable, decent and orderly, they doe vtterly deteſt if they appeare to ſwerue from the corrupt and abominable cuſtomes of their Country, and the traditions of their fathers: The people of our natiue Country are generally of another conſtitution, and of a contrarie but farre better naturall diſpoſition; although they are moſt conſtant in their reſolutions, while they conceiue and imagine them to be iuſt, good and godly, and doe follow that courſe of religion and life, which they haue embraced for the beſt with ſtrong affection and zeale; yet naturally they are ſo ingenious, and ſo reaſonable and tractable, that when good reaſon is ſhewed to them for the contrary, they are ready as to conceiue and vnderſtand it, ſo to yeeld vnto it generally and for the moſt part: (onely ſome deſperate reprobates, and refractarie rebells excepted, whom God for their wilfull reiecting of the truth, hath giuen ouer to bee blinded and bewitched by the deluſion and inchantments of Popiſh Prieſts and Ieſuites, and to be poſſeſſed by their

diabolicall ſpirit.) And (if we may giue credit to the learned hiſtoriographers who haue narrowly ſearched, and taken a diligent ſurvey of all the ſhires of this Kingdome, and obſerued and noted in their publike records and writings the manners of the people) as the inhabitants of our Country of *Lancaſhire* are in bodily feature and outward forme generally more beautifull and comely, then in many other Countries; ſo in reſpect of the inward diſpoſition of their mindes they are euery way anſwerable, that it is a people of good vnderſtanding, quicke of apprehenſion, well tempered in their wills and affections, and ready to be ruled by reaſon: So that if any ſhall obiect againſt this our good motion, and oppoſe as a barre or obſtacle againſt it the blind zeale and head-ſtrong affection, wherewith a great part of our natiue Country, and many of our people in diuers parts thereof are carried away from the truth and true religion, after Popiſh ſuperſtition and Idolatrie; and ſhall from thence conclude, that in all likeli-hood and probabilitie, our contribution of money, and the labours of our preachers ſhalbe ſpent in vaine, and for no profit, on a refractarie and obſtinate people, who like *deafe adders will ſtop their eares, and refuſe to heare the voyce of the charmers, charme they neuer ſo wiſely*, as they haue done heretofore euer ſince the firſt reuiuing of the Goſpell and reformation of religion in this Kingdome: I will anſwere, that this which is obiected as a barre or impediment, is indeed none all to ſuch as rightly vnderſtand and conſider it; but on the contrary offers to our conſideration ſpeciall incouragements and motiues to further vs in this worke. For firſt, true Chriſtianity teacheth vs to ſhew mercy and charity to our brethren in miſerie and bondage, and the greater we perceiue that their danger and miſerie is wherein they remaine, the more to be moued inwardly with pitty and compaſſion towards them, and rather then we will indure the ſight of their continuall extremities, to make a deſperate attempt for their deliuerance, and to aduenture vpon a great hazard euen when there is little or no hope of their recouerie in outward ap-

pearance,

pearance. We haue many examples of Gods faithfull Saints recorded in the Scriptures to this purpose: The penitent *Israelites* captiued in *Babylon*, so often and so long as they remembred *Zions desolation*, and the deplored estate of their natiue Country, could joy in nothing, but spent their time in weeping and in studying the good and prosperity of *Ierusalem*: *Psal.* 137. Queene *Hester* when her people the *Iewes* were in extreme danger, by reason of a Commission or warrant sealed for the generall massacre and destruction of them all, did run in a desperate hazard euen of her owne life, and resolued for their deliuerance to attempt the recalling of the Kings vnchangeable decree, saying, *If I perish, I perish*: *Hest.* 4. 16. And godly *Nehemiah*, when he had receiued intelligence of the great affliction and reproach of his brethren in *Iudea* after their returne from captiuity, and of the City and place of his fathers sepulchre lying wast and consumed with fire, was so sad and heauy, that he could not rest nor looke cheerfully on the King his Lord, vntill by earnest prayer to God and petition to the King, he had preuailed and gotten leaue to goe with a large commission for the repairing of *Ierusalem*: *Nehem.* 1 and 2. Saint *Paul* the more stiffe-necked that he found the *Iewes*, and the more zealous with blind zeale not according to knowledge, the more he pitied them being his Country-men, and the more he laboured by all meanes to win them, and fought to saue some of them though it were with the losse of his owne life, as appeares *Act.* 24. 17. *Rom.* 9. 1, 2. And he who is the example of all examples, and the patterne whom all Christians are bound to follow, our Lord & Sauiour Christ, when wee all were in a desperate and wofull condition by meanes of our sinfull corruption and many sinnes rebelliously committed against God, from which the whole world was not able to redeeme vs, did not cast vs off, but vndertooke a worke for vs, and did vndergoe a burden vnder which all the Angells of God, and all creatures would faint, faile and sinke downe if it were laid vpon them. And therfore as we desire to walke in the wayes of Gods Saints, and

to conforme our ſelues to our head Chriſt: ſo let the great danger of our natiue Country and Country-men in which they lye, and the ſlauiſh ſuperſtition and blindnes by which their ſoules as well as their bodies are held in captiuitie vnder the Pope and the Deuill, ſtirre vs vp to vſe this and all other meanes which God hath reuealed in his word, and experience of all ages hath diſcouered to be helpfull remedies againſt all ſuch maladies.

Secondly, If we examine the cauſe of this head-ſtrong blind zeale which ouer-ſpreades our Country, and take true notice of the meanes which maintaine this Popiſh ſuperſtition and ignorance in our people; they will appeare to bee ſuch as may juſtly more incourage vs in this worke, then any way diſhearten or diſcourage vs from it. It is true that ſome places, Cities and Countries for ſome notorious pollution are hated and curſed of God, and ſet apart to bee ſpectales of his wrathfull vengeance, and examples of dreadfull deſolation, as the plaine Countrie and Cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*: And ſome people are reprobates, whom God in his ſecret counſell hath rejected, and therefore either doth with-hold from them all meanes of ſaluation, eſteeming them like ſwine, before whom he will not caſt the precious pearles of his word and ſaraments at all, as we haue plaine examples *Act.* 16. where the Spirit forbad the Apoſtles, and would not ſuffer them to goe to preach in ſome Countries, and to ſome people: or elſe doth ſend his Goſpell and the miniſters of his word and ſacraments vnto them, not for their good to conuert them, but as a curſe for their greater condemnation to harden them, as his word and miracles by *Moſes* were ſent to *Pharaoh*, *Exod.* 7.3. and to be vnto them as the Goſpell preached is to periſhing reprobates, euen *the ſauour of death vnto death*: 2 *Cor.* 2. 16. Now when and where ignorance, ſuperſtition and blind zeale proceede from theſe cauſes and grounds, they are deſperate and incurable, and whatſoeuer coſt or labour is there beſtowed proues vaine, & is like water ſpilt on the ground. But ſometimes ignorance, blind zeale, ſuperſtition and idolatrie,

latrie are found to ouer-ſpread ſome Countries, and ſtrongly to poſſeſſe ſome people through want of means and good inſtruction, becauſe God ſuffers his word and Goſpell to be with-held from them for a time, either through the malice and negligence of their rulers and ouerſeers, vpon whom hee hath a purpoſe to execute his juſt wrath to the full, by bringing vpon them the blood of many poore ſoules which through their default doe periſh; or elſe for to trie, proue and exerciſe the charity of their brethren and neighbours, who are called and conuerted already before them, and haue receiued grace to bee Gods people, whom the Lord hath a purpoſe to prouoke to pittie and charitie, by ſetting before them ſuch examples of miſerable blindneſſe, which haue great neede of their helpe and commiſeration: In theſe caſes, the greateſt ignorance, moſt blind ſuperſtition and moſt head-ſtrong zeale, ſtanding for errors and a falſe religion, are not deſperate, but haue great hope of cure by the word of God, and ſuch meanes applied to them; yea ſuch head-ſtrong, zealous and ſuperſtitious people, when the true and cleare light of the Goſpell once ſhines vnto them by meanes of an able and powerfull miniſtery, are by experience found to become no leſſe, but rather more zealous for the truth, and for God and godlineſſe, then before they haue beene for falſhood and errors. And that this is the very caſe and condition of our natiue Country, and of our blind, zealous and ſuperſtitious brethren and neighbours inhabiting, it appeares plainly by two ſtrong and infallible arguments.

Firſt, that their ignorance and blind zeale proceede from want of ordinary meanes, to wit, the preaching of the word and good inſtruction, experience plainely proues, and no man can with any colour of reaſon denie: For although our Country of *Lancaſhire* is one of the largeſt ſhires in this Kingdome, yet it hath for the publike worſhip of God onely thirty ſix Pariſh Churches within the large circuite of it, as our hiſtories ſhew, and ſome Pariſhes forty miles in compaſſe to my knowledge, wheras ſome other ſhires not much

larger

larger then one diuision or hundred of *Lancashire*, are knowne and recorded to haue two or three hundred Parish Churches in them, and those farre better furnished with meanes for maintenance of an able ministery then ours are: for example the hundred of Fourneſſe where I was borne, which for ſpatious compaſſe of ground is not much leſſe then *Bedfordſhire* or *Rutlandſhire*, it hath onely eight Parish Churches, and ſeuen of those eight are impropriate, and the liuings in the hands of Lay men, and in ſome of those Pariſhes which be forty miles in compaſſe, there is no more ordinary and ſet maintenance allowed for the miniſtery of the word and ſacraments, but ten pounds or twenty nobles yearly. And therefore though the people were naturally the moſt tractable vnder the Sunne, no man could in reaſon looke for any thing but abundance of ignorance ruling among them, till it pleaſe God to ſtirre vp the publicke ſtate, or the ſpirits of ſome godly priuate Chriſtians, to prouide ſome maintenance for the conſtant miniſtery of the word, to be ſet vp and continued among them: yea (conſidering what large ſpacious walkes, and how many couerts and lurking places there are in thoſe thicke miſts and ſhades of ignorance and darkneſſe for Ieſuites and ſeminary Prieſts thoſe ſonnes and miniſters of darkneſſe, who commonly find beſt intertainment for their flattery and painted hypocriſie among ſuch people, as being naturally diſpoſed to deuotion and religion, are notwithſtanding held captiue in ignorance for want of meanes: and alſo finde moſt libertie and beſt roome to beſtirre thmſelues, and greateſt freedome from diſcouerie in thoſe Pariſhes, where there are no learned Preachers, nor vigilant Paſtors:) let reaſon judge how vnlikely and almoſt impoſſible it is for that people to be free from blind head-ſtrong zeale, and that Popiſh ſuperſtition and Idolatrie ſhould not generally poſſeſſe them?

Secondly, as Saint *Paul* argues for the nation of the naturall *Iſraelites Rom.* 11.1. and proues that they were not vtterly caſt away of God, becauſe hee himſelfe and diuers others of them were gathered vnto Chriſt by the Goſpell,

and

and an elect remnant was found among them in the dayes of Christ and his Apostles, when generally they persecuted the truth, and seemed to be most opposite and stiffenecked: So we may much more and vpon stronger grounds of reason argue for our blind superstitious Countri-men, that they are not a reprobate people, whom God hath cast away, and giuen ouer to desperate blindnesse and obstinacy, neuer to be conuerted; because not onely we our selues being many haue by Gods grace extended plentifully vnto vs, receiued the word, and doe beleeue in Christ, and professe true Christianity; but also many noble worthies haue sprung vp and flourished in the Church of God, and shined as lights through this Kingdome, and the whole Christian world, who being borne in our barren soyle, and in their child-hood muzled vp in superstition, so soone as God brought them to the light of the Gospell in the vniuersities, the nurseries of learning and true religion, they became famous and renowned professors of diuinity, and most stout and strong maintainers of the truth against Papists, and all other Heretiques. I cannot passe by in silence, but for example will name and mention with honour and reuerence, that mirrour of learning and religion Doctor *Whitakers* our sometimes worthy professor in *Cambridge*, whose name is still dreadfull to our aduersaries, and his writings of greatest esteeme euen in forraigne Countries at this day, and his memorie euer blessed: Yea wee find by daily experience, that in those parishes and places of our natiue Country, which haue heretofore beene most grieuously ouer-runne with ignorance and superstition, while they wanted the meanes of knowledge the ministery of the word, and where the word at the first preaching thereof hath beene strongly opposed; now by meanes of a constant ministerie, and powerfull preaching continued among them, the people doe become generally so zealous for the truth, so feruent in their zeale, so forward in their profession, so strict in their liues, & in the worship of God, so opposit to all shadows of superstition, that some thinke they haue more need of the bridle

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY CAMBRIDGE

then the spurre; like the *Israelites* in the wildernesse, who offered so frankly & abundantly to the building of Gods tabernacle, that there was found muchmore then enough for the seruice of the work,& *Moses* gaue commandment, and caused them by publike proclamation to be restrained from bringing any more, *Exod.* 36. I my selfe doe know, and can name for instance if neede require, diuers parishes which within my memorie, were deepely plunged in superstition, and euen drowned in ignorance, insomuch that the name of a preacher was as much scorned of many, as the name of a babler, and of some as much hated as the name of an heretique; but now of late yeares I haue seene with mine eyes such a wonderfull alteration wrought by Gods grace and blesing accompanying the labours of some holy and godly preachers sent among them, that they are ready and willing to run many miles to heare sermons, when they haue them not at home, and lay aside all care of worldly profit, leauing their labour and worke on weeke dayes, to frequent publike meetings for prophecy and expounding of Gods word, and hardly can a preacher trauell through their townes, and lodge there on any day in the week, but they will by importunitie obteine a publicke sermon from him, and in great troupes suddainly and vpon short warning assembled, they will gladly and cheerfully heare him with all reuerence and attention. And therefore as St. *Paul* from his owne example, & the examples of a small remnant of beleeuing *Iewes*, who by so many miracles & much powerfull preaching of Christ himselfe, and his extraordinarie Apostles and Prophets were called and drawne to beleue, did conclude that God had not reiected and cast away the whole nation as reprobates past hope: So may we much more strongly conclude, from the example of our selues who are many, and from the example of those worthy professors and pillars of the Church, whom God hath raised vp out of our Country by ordinarie meanes, and most of all from the great multitudes of godly Christians, who by hundreds and thousands are daily called and turned by ordinarie preaching from the darkenesse of ignorance,

ignorance, to the light of true knowledge, and from blind zeale and loue of poperie and superstition, to the feruent loue of the truth, and zealous profession of the holy Gospell of Christ: I say from these many examples, we may as vpon stronger grounds of reason conclude, that God hath not cast away our people, nor rejected our natiue Country, neither in so many places keepes his word from them, as from a reprobate people neuer to be conuerted; but rather doth suffer them to liue so long in ignorance and miserable blindnesse, partly for a greater judgement on ouer-ruling Church-robbers, that he may bring on them and their houses and families the blood of many soules, which perish through their sacrilege and couetousnesse: and partly to prouoke and stirre vp to pitty and charity, vs, whom he hath first conuerted, and to minister vnto vs matter of true Christian charity, and to giue vs occasion to exercise that piety which we professe, that our faith by liuely fruites of good workes, may be made to appeare more glorious to the eyes of the world, and may shine in the midst of the Church, and among all the people of God.

Lastly, (Deare brethren and Country-men) for our full perswasion and steadfast assurance, that our natiue Country (notwithstanding the ignorance and blindnesse ouershadowing it, and the blind superstition possessing the people generally in diuers parts thereof) is a place, which God hath chosen to put his name there, and our brethren the inhabitants thereof are a people chosen of God, and holy according to the election of grace; let vs call to remembrance and daily set before our eyes, what holy and excellent first fruites it hath brought forth vnto God. I meane holy professors and martyrs in the first times of the pure light of the Gospell beginning to shine forth in this land. Among all godly martyrs within the dayes of King *Edward* the sixth, were great builders of Gods Church by their sound doctrine, painfull labours, and holy liues, and in the bloody reigne of Queen *Mary*, sealed the Gospell with their blood, who more renowned in the historie of martyrs, then Mr.

Iohn Bradford a *Lancashire* man? whose godly writings and meditations able to make a stonie heart to bleede, remaine to the profit and comfort of Gods Church in all succeeding ages, whose constant profession of the true faith vnto death, & in the midst of the fire was admired of his enemies, & shall euer bee remembred while God hath an elect and faithfull people in this land, and whose memorie shall be blessed for euer. Among the godly, faithfull and learned men, whom this land brought forth in those first times, and which shined forth as lights out of darkenesse, who after many cruell persecutions and banishment which they endured for the Gospell in Queene *Maries* dayes, did suruiue her bloody reigne, and in the dayes of Queene *Elizabeth* of euer blessed memorie, flourished in this Church, and were notable instruments of God in the restoring and establishing of religion: who more admired for piety, prudence, learning and charitie, then that most reuerend father in Gods Church, *Edwin Sandes* borne in *Fournsells* in *Lancashire*, who at the time of the decease of *Edward* the sixth, being Doctor of diuinitie, and vice Chancellour of the vniuersitie of *Cambridge*, did so wisely and prudently behaue himselfe in the midst of those troubles and that great confusion, especially in his publike sermon which he was commanded by the Duke of *Northumberland*, to make against Queene *Mary* in that great assembly at *Cambridge*, where the Duke himselfe with many nobles and men of warre were assembled to goe and apprehend her; that he gaue content to the Duke; and yet the Queene and her party could not from thence take any aduantage against him: who also after many troubles, persecutions and imprisonment, escaped with great difficultie, and fled beyond the seas, and from thence returning in the beginning of Queene *Elizabeths* reigne, after his learned disputations against the Popish Bishops, was in the judgement of that noble Queene and her wise counsell, esteemed worthy of greatest promotions in the Church, and was preferred first to be Bishop of *Worcester*, after Bishop of *London*, and lastly Arch-bishop of *Yorke*, in all which seas he flourish-

ed,

ed, and was famous for his promoting of pietie, aduancing of learned preachers, and for publike workes of charitie, among the reſt for his erecting & indowing of a free ſchoole at *Hauxhead* where he was borne, and where I one of the meaneſt of his kindred was in my youth trained vp in learning; who alſo dying in a good old age, left behind him a noble progenie and race of ſons, diuers of whom do vntill this day floriſh in wealth & honor, and are famous for wiſdome, eloquence and experience in matters of religion and pollicie obteined by their trauells in many forraigne Countries, and are men noted for other noble vertues in this ſtate and kingdome. The time would faile me, if I ſhould reckon vp by name all our Country-men famous in this kind, & ſhould relate their worthy acts; as Mr. *Alexander Nowell* Doctor of diuinity and Deane of *Paules*, whoſe taſt of perſecution and baniſhment with other troubles and afflictions which he endured in Queene *Maries* dayes, wrought in him ſuch charity and compaſſion to the poore, that he became a patterne as of piety towards God, ſo of pitty to the poore; and hauing ſpent his dayes and his wealth in continuall workes of charity, left alſo after him worthy monuments of his piety and charity, which remaine in *Oxford* and other places to the worlds end, for the benefit of young Schollers borne in *Lancaſhire*, and for their education in learning and good literature. I might alſo adde among all the reſt one of mine owne name and neare kinred, *Iohn Walker* Doctor of diuinitie, and ſometimes Arch-deacon and reſidenciary of St. *Pauls* Church in *London*, in whoſe breaſt godly zeale began to burne in his youth and tender yeares ſo feruently, that in the dayes of *Henrie* the eight when Popery began to decline, & the way was but a preparing for reformation of religion, he together with the godly Arch-biſhop before named, out of their deteſtation and hatred which they bare to Popiſh ſuperſtition and Idolatry, did like *Gideon* ſecretly cut, mangle and deface the Popiſh Images in the Church of *Hauxhead*, the place of their natiuity and mine; vpon ſuſpicion whereof he was forced to flee out of his Country, and was ſecretly

nourished and brought vp in *Cambridge*, where he became a man of note for his great learning, and after persecution and banishment which he suffered in Queene *Maries* time, he was aduanced in the happy dayes of Queene *Elizabeth* to the dignities fore-named, of which how worthy he was may appeare by his disputation with *Campian* the Popes Challenger yet extant in print, against whom he was by the publike authority of the state chosen and appointed to dispute among other chose learned men of the Kingdome. Now these with many others most godly and zealous professors & holy martyrs, being the first fruites of our natiue Country of *Lancashire* which it brought forth, and offered vnto God in the first day spring of the reuiuing Gospell, I see no cause why we may not conclude, and vpon this ground assure our selues, that our Country and the generall body or multitude of our people are an holy lumpe or masse chosen of God, and holy according to the election of grace; and that in due time they shall be generally conuerted and actually called to the knowledge and profession of the true faith: For thus the holy Apostle *Paul* doth reason & conclude concerning his Country-men the *Iewes Rom.* 11. 16. That *if the first first fruites be holy, the lumpe also must be holy.* Wherefore let no vaine scruples, no vncharitable doubtings, no euill surmises disturbe vs in this good worke of piety and charity, nor withdraw our hearts, nor cause vs to withdraw our hands from a liberall contribution, which is so necessary and commodious for the aduancement of religion in the place of our natiuity, and which hath so much hope of gaining many soules of our brethren to God. Although I haue no warrant in Gods word to perswade you with Popish motiues or merit, that by cheerfull performance of this pious worke, you shall merit great rewards and blessings at Gods handes; no not if you should sell all that you haue, and bestow on works of this nature; (because all that we haue is Gods he hath lent it vs, and if we giue all to him we giue him but his owne; neither can we by all we haue be profitable to God, for he needs nothing of ours, our well doing is ako-

gether

gether for our owne good and the good of our brethren, and ſerues to glorifie Gods grace in vs, not to adde any glory to him in himſelfe, and to magnifie his name and his goodneſſe before men, not to make him any better in his owne nature or perſon:) yet thus much I aſſure you, that if out of loue to godlineſſe, and out of humble obedience to Gods majeſtie, and true charity to the ſoules of his people, all proceeding from a liuely faith in Chriſt, you be ſtirred vp to ſhew your ſelues cheereſull, forward and bountifull in this pious and charitable worke, according to the ability which God hath giuen to euery one of you; this your well-doing ſhall vndoubtedly receiue from God great recompenſe of reward of his free grace and bounty, and for the merit of Chriſt; and the more good workes that you do of this kind, the more euidence and teſtimony you ſhall haue of true faith and of the ſpirit of God dwelling in you, and making you one body with Chriſt, and partakers of his merits; which euidence ſhall not onely confirme you againſt all temptations, and comfort you in all affl ctions, and make your proſperity ſweet vnto your ſoules in this life: but alſo ſhall ſtand vp in judgement for you, and proue you true members of Chriſt, that in him and for his merits ſake you may receiue the eternall kingdome and inheritance prepared for all the elect and faithfull before the foundation of the world. Now my deare brethren and beloued Countrymen, as I in this hope haue many yeares ſtudied and deſired to ſet this good worke on foote for the good of my Country, and the ſaluation of my brethren, and as I haue ſpent both my labour and ſome money, and much precious time within the ſpace of theſe two yeares laſt paſt in attempting and beginning this worke, about the gathering of your names ſeuerally and particularly, and ſolliciting ſome of you, among whom I haue found diuers very forward, free and bountifull farre beyond expectation, and as I am ready euen to the vtmoſt of my ability to goe before you by my example in this contribution: So I beſeech you that for the ſame hopes ſake, you will be ready to joyne with me

and

and others who haue begun well, and that you will goe on with vs, and accompanie vs to the perfecting of this worthy worke. And for a conclusion of this exhortation, I humbly beseech the Lord to enlarge your hearts according to the meanes and abilitie which hee hath giuen you, that you may extend the bowells of compassion to your brethren who sit in miserable darkneſſe and in the shadow of death, that they being called to the fellowshippe of the same grace with vs, we may all glorifie Gods name before men in this life, and bee glorified of him with endleſſe glory in the life to come, and may all reigne with Christ our head the King of glory for euer world without end: To whom and to the word of whose grace I commend you all now and euer. Amen.

Your most affectionate Country-man, fellow-seruant in Christianity, and brother in all Christian loue, GEORGE WALKER Pastor of St. *Iohn Euangelists* in *Watling-streete* in LONDON.

FINIS.